

Australia's Iconic Kimberley 2025

Waterfalls, rivers, wildlife and more!

10 nights on board

11 Days

PKG No. UC035

Departure dates

See Schedule

Starting from

\$13,399

Exclusive Offer

Ponant Cruises

Australia

Overview

Book your 2025 Kimberley voyage and receive a \$500pp flight credit, a night's accommodation, Euro150 pp on board credit and luxury car transfers!

Package Overview

Discover King George River, Twin Falls, Hunter River, Collier Bay, Montgomery Reef and the Buccaneer Archipelago whilst cruising in luxurious comfort onboard Le Laperouse in 2025.

One of the last unspoiled regions in the world, The Kimberley awaits your discovery. This spectacular region stretches from Darwin, along the north-western coast line to Broome and is approximately two-thirds the size of France. Remote and wild, some areas are only accessible by boat, allowing the region to remain uncommercialised and untouched.

Remnants of early civilisations dating back thousands of years can still be seen in the form of rock art in remote caves and the history of these early, isolated inhabitants is fascinating. The landscape is seriously spectacular with red, sunburnt cliffs plunging into abrupt ravines and rivers snaking through the scorched land to tumble over cliffs in dramatic waterfalls. Here you will find several of Mother Nature's works of art with the Horizontal Falls and Montgomery Reef, which seems to rise magically out of the ocean on an outgoing tide, exposing the reef in all her glory and any unfortunate marine life that didn't manage to make it off the rocks in time. With its unexpected reefs and unpredictable tides, it's easy to see why so many early ships came to grief here. Shipwrecks and stories of early explorers abound!

Saltwater crocodiles, endemic birdlife and native flora and fauna can all be sighted on your travels and with the naturally stunning landscape for a backdrop, you won't be able to help reaching for your camera! For some truly amazing photo opportunities, scenic flights over the waterfalls and canyons are a great option as seeing the sheer size and majesty of The Kimberleys from the air will give you a whole new perspective.

This is the Australia that greeted the early intrepids. Unforgiving and robust, yet breathtakingly beautiful, The Kimberley will hold you spellbound. This is the Australia of yesterday... unspoilt, rugged, red and resplendent and incredibly resilient. You simply have to see it to fully

appreciate it.

Vessel



Environmentally friendly, fitted with innovative equipment and complete with lounges designed to be largely open to the exterior, this new and intimately sized yacht offers a unique type of cruise experience.

Onboard this ship sailing under the French flag, you'll experience the incomparable pleasure of a cosily intimate cruise offering the possibility of exploring an ever-increasing range of destinations in an ethnic chic ambiance and with five-star service.

The Blue Eye, a multisensorial underwater lounge offering a unique experience unlike anything else in the world.

Features:

- All meals provided on board
- the Open Bar: beginning with boarding, and during the duration of the cruise, a wide selection of drinks (mineral water, soft drinks, wine, beer, Charles Heidsieck champagne, spirits, coffee, tea) is served on request and at any time of the day. Certain premium alcoholic beverages on the menu are not included in the Open Bar,
- free Wi-Fi internet access 24 hours a day*,
- activities and excursions offered during expedition cruises as specified in the itinerary
- Spa and Wellness Centre
- Swimming pool
- Guest Lecturer
- Fitness Room
- Blue Eye Underwater Observation Lounge
- Wine with lunch and dinner (1 bottle per table)

Tonnage 9976

Build date 2017

Crew 118

Capacity 184

Length 131m

Itinerary



Day 1 Darwin

Darwin is located in Australia's Northern Territory which is also known as the "Top End". It is the capital city and the most populated town of the Northern Territory. Darwin is a beautiful tropical city, a melting pot of people and cultures, over 50 different cultures live and work side by side that prides itself in its unique and friendly laid-back lifestyle. Come discover the town's still recent history through its emblematic buildings such as the new Parliament House opened in 1994, a magnificent example of tropical architecture or Admiralty House declared heritage place, a tropical-style home elevated on stilts that has survived two cyclones and numerous air raids.

Day 2 King George River

The journey up the King George River is nothing short of breathtaking. The 80-metre-high sides of the gorge display varying degrees of weathering of the ancient Warton sandstone. The colours and textures of the gorge change with the light as you travel further up the river creating a continual changing scenery that is simply stunning. The journey culminates at the King George twin falls; the highest single-drop falls in the whole of the Kimberley (80 m or 260 ft). Fed by wet season run-off the level of water cascading over the falls varies from year to year. Your Expedition Team will escort you in either the zodiacs or ships tenders to the foot of the twin falls, and explain all about the stunning geological formations of the canyon.

Day 3 Vansittart Bay

Jar Island contains ancient rock art galleries depicting the Gwion Gwion style unique to the Kimberley region. Mainly neglected by, or unknown to, the early European researchers of Aboriginal culture in the Kimberley in favour of the dominant and more dramatic Wandjina art, Gwion Gwion art has in recent years gained world prominence. It is generally thought that this art may extend back to over 30,000 years before our time and represents the first wave of seagoing colonisers of the Australian continent. As it is, these are the oldest detailed depiction of human figures in the world. Join your Expedition Team ashore for a short walk, past some fascinating rock formations, to the site of the Gwion Gwion art galleries.

Day 4 Ashmore Reef (Technical stop)

Located 600km North of Broome, on the edge of the continental shelf, Ashmore reef consists of 3 low-lying tropical islands surrounded by coral reef. The islands have a combined land area of approximately 54 hectares and are a designated important bird area (IBA). Visitation

to Ashmore reef and Islands is strictly controlled and most of the reef is designated as a sanctuary zone where access is prohibited. Our visit to Ashmore reef is required to ensure we comply with Australian government regulations. Should weather, sea and tide conditions permit there may be an opportunity for guests to undertake a zodiac tour to the vicinity of West Island.

Day 5 Careening Bay

Careening Bay was named by Lieutenant Phillip Parker King after his ship, HMC Mermaid, was careened there during his third voyage of discovery in 1820. King surveyed the western coast to complete the map initiated by Flinders 20 years earlier. The Mermaid had been leaking badly and King needed to find a shallow sandy bay where he could careen his boat to undertake repairs. At a high tide, on a warm September afternoon, he ran the Mermaid onto the sands. For ten days the Mermaid crew worked hard before refloating the vessel. The ship's carpenter carved the name of the vessel and the year into a conspicuous boab tree. The famous boab tree is now 3 metres wide and National Heritage listed. A reminder of a by gone era of exploration!

Day 6 Swift Bay

The Bonaparte Archipelago, is a stunningly rugged maze of islands stretching almost 150 km along Western Australia's remote Kimberley coast. Its colour and scale conspire to take ones' breath away. Its distant location has meant it has remained an unspoilt and remarkably pristine location to explore and experience. Phillip Parker King named "Swift's bay" after Jonathon Swift (1667-1745) the author of Gulliver's travels. The 'T' shaped bay is composed of heavily fractured sandstone providing an abundance of rock shelters. On the walls of these shelters are examples of both Wandjina and Gwion Gwion style rock art. Join your expedition team ashore for a guided walk to a number of rock art galleries depicting these unique rock art styles.

Day 7 Hunter River

Arguably one of the most scenic parts of the Kimberley coast, Prince Frederick Harbour and the Hunter River are lined with ancient rainforest pockets, pristine mangroves and mosaic sandstone cliffs. They are considered to be some of the most pristine mangrove forests in the world, containing up to 18 different species, supporting a rich and diverse fauna. The sandstone escarpment at the river mouth, known as "Kampamantiya" rises over 200 metres high before giving way to extensive mud banks and mangrove forests home to numerous bird species and the iconic saltwater crocodile. Our expert Expedition Team will share their knowledge with you as you explore this pristine mangrove environment by zodiac keeping a constant lookout for wildlife. You will also have the opportunity to reach the Mitchell Falls by helicopter from Naturalist Island beach.

Day 8 Collier Bay

Lying to the east of the Buccaneer archipelago, the ancient landscapes of Collier Bay have been shaped by the massive tidal movements the region is renowned for, creating a photographer's paradise. With a tidal range exceeding 14 metres, recorded near Yule entrance at the southern end of the bay, they are among the largest in the world. This massive daily movement of water creates unique phenomena that occur nowhere else in the world. Nestled in the centre of the Bay is Montgomery Reef, the world's largest inshore reef system. As the tide falls a raging torrent of water cascades off the top of the reef, creating turbulent

'rivers' and mini waterfalls. At the Southern end of the Bay, Talbot Bay is home to the world's only 'Horizontal Falls' described by Sir David Attenborough as "One of the greatest wonders of the natural world." Hidden in the many caves and grottos of this ancient landscape are a multitude of ancient Rock Art galleries. Here you can find spectacular examples of the Wandjina and Gwion Gwion styles. As we are at the mercy of weather and tide conditions in this region, the activities mentioned above are only possible experiences and can't be guaranteed.

Day 9 Collier Bay

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Day 10 Lacepede Islands

The Lacepede Islands are Western Australia's most important breeding habitat for Green Turtles (*Chelonia mydas*), and have been named by BirdLife International as an Important Bird Area (IBA). The breeding colony of Brown Boobies is possibly the largest in the world. Up to 20,000 Roseate Terns have also been recorded here. Other birds breeding on the islands include Masked Boobies, Australian Pelicans, Lesser Frigatebirds, Eastern Reef Egrets, Silver Gulls, Crested, Bridled and Lesser Crested Terns, Common Noddies, Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers. Join your expedition team for a guided zodiac tour to view the prolific wildlife. Due to the sensitive nature of the environment, landings are prohibited on the Lacepede Islands.

Day 11 Broome

Located in the northwest of the Kimberley region and in the far north of Western Australia, the town of Broome is reputed for its history and its glorious pearling era. The fascinating Chinatown district, which is the historic city centre, and the famous Japanese Cemetery, dates back to 1896, and has a past marked by the immigration of numerous Chinese and Japanese workers, attracted by the prosperous pearl industry at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century. Broome is also famous for the "Staircase to the Moon", an optical illusion created by the Moon reflecting on the sand banks at low tide, like a staircase climbing up towards the sky, a unique spectacle provided by nature...

Departure Schedule



DARWIN TO BROOME:

24 April 2024
14 May 2024
22 May 2024
03 June 2024
11 June 2024
23 June 2024
01 July 2024
21 July 2024
02 August 2024
10 August 2024
22 August 2024
30 August 2024
11 September 2024
19 September 2024

BROOME TO DARWIN Departures also available.
(note: Itinerary is slightly different - please ask for details)

Activities

Guided shore excursions

Join Ponant's expert expedition team on guided excursions in each port of call. Step aboard the zodiacs for an up close and personal exploration experience, learn about ancient history, culture and rock art and spot the plentiful wildlife with your excursion guide.

Wellness Area

After a day out exploring, indulge in a luxurious spa treatment, sauna or massage in the Wellness Area. There is also a gym and hair salon.

The Blue Eye Lounge

Discover the underwater world in the multisensorial Blue Eye Lounge.

Special Inclusion



- NZ\$500pp air credit
- 10 night luxury expedition cruise aboard PONANT's Le Laperouse
- 1 night pre-cruise accommodation
- All meals on board
- Open bar: from the moment you step onboard and throughout your cruise, a wide selection of drinks (mineral water, soft drinks, wine, beer, Charles Heidsieck champagne, spirits, coffee and tea) are served on request and at any time of the day. Certain top-shelf premium alcoholic beverages are not included in the open bar.
- Zodiac outings and shore visits with your expedition team
- Free Wi-Fi internet access 24 hours a day
- Transfer from port to airport in Broome
- Luxury car transfer from your home to the airport and return (within 35km)

Packing Suggestions

On an expedition cruise, be sure to bring practical clothes as well as comfortable shoes suitable for travelling in Zodiacs and disembarking on beaches or mud flats. On tropical expeditions be sure to bring a hat, sunglasses and long sleeved/legged clothing.

We advise our passengers to wear casual and elegant outfits at their convenience, and more formal attire for the Captain's Dinner.

Special Information

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Please contact us for the latest information on entry and visa requirements.

INOCULATIONS

At time of publishing, vaccinations were not required. Passengers should consult their travel agent for the latest requirements.

RATES

Rates are per adult, in double or single occupancy. These fares are correct at the time of printing and are subject to change; with or without notice.

RATES DO NOT INCLUDE

Shipboard purchases, gratuities, port taxes other than those specifically provided for, and other personal items. Rates quoted at the time of printing are based on current costs and are subject to change up to and including the date of sailing.

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